



BROTHERHOOD IN ISLAM

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THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL:

Islam in its wide sense is meant for peace and human welfare for its followers. It is the religion of brotherhood for its followers to whatsoever languages, colour, countries they may belong. My talk will deal with the brotherhood among muslims, the followers of Islam which is the religion for the whole mankind. God selected, for its propagation in complete form, His last Messenger, Muhammad (may peace on Him) and revealed upon him His last holy book, the Quran.

We can say about Islam that it is the religion of brotherhood among its followers, as the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Prohpet called upon Muslims to be brothers in Islam. This brotherhood was one of the main aims of the Prophet Muhammad which he practised at the first opportunity. It is one of the most distinguished signs of the Muslim Ummah, which is to be the best community ever brought forth among men.

After being rejected by his people, the Prophet Muhammad at every occasion, seeks for protection and invites the persons of other tribes to embrace the new religion, specially the tribes which visit the Holy places in Mecca. To achieve this aim, the Prophet suffered a lot. Islam was not accepted and did not take deep root until the time when with the will of God al-Ansar, Aus and Khayraj (the tribes of Medina) embraced the new religion which spread among them rapidly, and when Muslims began to immigrate to Medina. This success was crowned by the immigration of the Prophet accompanied by Abu Bakar. They were followed soon by Ali, the cousin of the Prophet, who was allowed by him to wait in Mecca to give the people back their trusts which were kept in the custody of the Prophet. When Islam was able to breathe freely at Medina, the positive steps were taken by the Prophet to strengthen Muslim brotherhood and to develop into a strong Ummah by practising what they were ordered by God to act upon.

God says in His Holy Book:

"You have had a good example in God's Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the Last Day, and remembers God oft."

Main steps taken by the Prophet to establish Islamic brotherhood

(1) Building the mosques first of Quba and second of the Prophet:

Erecting a mosque is the first thing about which the Prophet took care. The Prophet himself and the believers worked together to build the two mosques. In spite of the fact that the Prophet stayed very shortly in Quba from Monday, 12th of Rabia al-Awwal, till Friday morning, the 16th of Rabia al-Awwal, the mosque of Quba was erected during these four days. The mosque of Quba is the first mosque in Islam to be founded with godfearing spirit from the first day. God says in the Holy Quran:

"A mosque founded upon godfearing from the first day is worthier for you to stand in; there in are men who love to cleanse themselves; and God loves those who cleanse themselves."

(Repentance, ver. 108)

It is stated that the Prophet was the first person to put the first stone, followed by Abu Bakar, who put another stone by the Prophet's one, then people continued building the mosque till it was completed.

On the Prophet's way from Quba to Medina (the distance is almost two miles), the time of the Friday prayer came; so the Prophet performed the prayer in the valley called Ranuna. It was the first Friday prayer to be performed by the Prophet at Medina.¹ In that place, a mosque was erected later on, and it is called the Friday Mosque. At the place in which the camel of the Prophet knelt down, the mosque of the Prophet at Medina was built. The Prophet worked himself in building this mosque, and persuaded the believers to do so. Al-Muhajiran and Ansar worked hard till it was completed.²

1 Assiratul Nabawiyyah; vol I, p. 494.

2 Assiratul Nabawiyyah; vol I, p. 496.

As Muslims have in the messenger of God their best example to follow, they must be quite sure that one of their most important duties, whoever they are, is to build mosques - the houses of God so that His name is recited in these mosques. God said:

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, and the glass as it was a glittering star, kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil well nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; God guides to His Light whom He will. And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has Knowledge of everything. In houses of God has allowed to be raised up, and His Name is to be commemorated therein glorifying Him, in the morning and the evenings, from the remembrance of God and to perform the prayers, and to pay the alms, fearing the day when hearts and eyes shall be turned about, that God may recompence them for their fairest works and give them increases of His bounty, and God provides whomsoever He will without reckoning."

(Light, ver. 35-38)

And God says:

"Only He shall inhabit God's places of worship who believes in God and the Last Day, and performs the prayer, and pays the alms, and fear none but Allah alone; it may be that those will be among the guided."

(Repentance, ver. 18)

The Prophet said:

"Who ever builds the mosque for the sake of God, God will build for him in return, a house in Paradise."

(Sahih Muslim, vol. I, p. 216 & vol. 2 p. 592)

The erecting of the mosque of Quba is one of the best examples to show the co-operation among muslims and to prove that consultation is one of the matters that distinguish them. It is said that 'Ammar b. Yasīn is the one who advised the Prophet to build the mosque of Quba; and he is the one who gathered its stones. When the Prophet put the foundation of the

mosque, 'Ammar completed its building.

At this occasion I would like to draw the attention to the importance of prayer in Islam, as it is considered the main pillar of Islam, and the one, who neglected it, is considered to have neglected the whole religion. As an evidence of the importance and the value of the prayer, it might be sufficient to state that it is the only worship that was imposed in heavens, when the Prophet Mhammad, may peace be upon him, was ascended to heavens.¹ It is five prayers during the twenty-four hours of the day. Gabriel, may peace be upon him, taught the Prophet how to make ritual ablution before prayer, how to pray and fix the timings.² It is well known that performing prayer as a group is twenty-seven times better than the prayer of the single, and each step will raise the prayer a rank and wipe out a sin of his, as it is stated in the sayings of the Prophet. There is also the Friday prayer, where Muslims gather together in mosques in congregation, which is performed by the residents and traveller, when he performs the Friday prayer, will get both the rewards of reducing the number of Raka'ats for the traveller (God likes that who accepts His orders as well as His concessions) and the reward of performing the prayer in a group.³ There is also the prayer of the two festivals of pilgrimage and of breaking fasting. On these two occasions, the whole Ummah (community), the dwellers and travellers, men, women and children gather at one place to perform these two prayers.⁴ It is easy to visualise the inhabitants of an Islamic city, when the prayer time comes, stopping their jobs, pouring in as groups and individuals, in calmness and dignity and going towards mosques to perform in a group, the prayer at its accurate time, led by the most learned and Godfearing among them. They are overwhelmed by submission to Allah. These facts, clearly indicate and represent the muslim brotherhood. Whenever a muslim travels and hears the voice of the caller of prayers, filling the ears of spaces, five times a day, he feels at the bottom of his heart that he is among his family and close relatives. Referring to the importance of prayer, the Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, said:

"Between the believer and being non-believer, is to give up performing prayer."

(Sahih Muslim, vol. I, p. 49)

1 See here, for example, Al-Tajrid Al-Sarih Ahadith Al-Jame Al-Sahih, vol. I, p.p. 36,37.

2 Assiratul Nabawiyah, vol. I, p.p. 244, 245.

3 Bina Al-Islam, p. 90.

4 Bina Al-Islam, p. 92.

(2) Establishing mosques as the centres of learning

If we had a careful look over the first two sermons delivered after his hijra, by the Prophet Muhammad, May peace be upon him, we would come to the conclusion that the Prophet was eager to realise peace and love spreading among the believers by backing each other, helping each other and loving each other. In the first sermon the Prophet said:

"He who can shield his face from the fire even with a little piece of a date let him do so; and he who cannot find that then with a good word; for the good deed will be rewarded tenfold yea to seven hundred fold."

(The Life of Muhammad, p. 231)

In the second sermon the Prophet said:

"Love one another in the spirit of God."

(The Life of Muhammad, p. 231)

It is clear that mosque combines between being a house of worship and being a school. About the mosque of the Prophet at Medina, we can say for sure, that it is considered the first university in Islam. Many other mosques were similar to that of Medina. Mosques, everywhere should be the same. It is clear that Islam is the religion of Knowledge and it is well known that what was revealed from the Holy Quran firstly, deals with the pen and the Knowledge.

(3) Establishing strong ties of friendship and brotherhood between Al-Muhajirin and Al-Ansar

When the prophet Muhammad, reached Medina, he was too eager to form the Muslim Ummah with unique and distinguished characteristics. The Prophet could firstly reach that aim through two main ways:

- (a) Through the correspondence that the Prophet wrote among emigrants and the helpers (Al-Muhajirin and Al-Ansar).

That letter began as follows:

"In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is the document from Muhammad the Prophet, governing the relations between the believers and Muslims of Quraish and Yathrib, and those who followed them and joined them and laboured with them. They are one community (Ummah) to the exclusion of all men.

Believers are friends one to the other to the exclusion of outsiders."

(The Life of Muhammad, p.p. 231, 232)

(b) Through the brotherhood that the Prophet instituted between Al-Muhajirin and Al-Ansar. The Prophet said:

"Let each of you take a brother in God."

(The Life of Muhammad, p. 234)

Islamic brotherhood and pillars of Islam

This Muslim Ummah believes in Allah as a God, in Islam as a religion, in the Holy Quran as a guide and in Muhammad, may peace be upon him, as a messenger. As told before the second pillar of Islam directs Muslims to mosques to meet each other, and hence it is considered as a good example for the muslim brotherhood, and a good way to make it more powerful. Let us have a quick glance over the last main three pillars of Islam, from the same point of view.

Dealing with alms, which is taken from rich people to be given to the poor as his share, God ordered that a portion be taken from the property of the rich. The rich is obliged to give that portion from the wealth that God bestowed upon him. Alms are not given to poor muslims only; they are given also to every poor in their country, even if he is not a muslim. It also might be given to the poor of the whole world, if the muslim world did not need it. According to the study being held by a scholar which deals with alms in an Islamic country, it is made clear, that when alms are gathered together, some of it may be given to the poor and some may be invested, for a very short time. In such a way we will be able to eradicate poverty, and change the position of those poor people from being taken alms into being given alms.¹ It is well known that at the time of death of the Umayyah Caliph, Umar b. Abd Aziz, who ruled only for thirty months, there was not even a single person who was in need of alms or charity.² This Caliph was merely an honourable practitioner of the Islamic instructions. One of the evidence that paying alms is very important in Islam is that its order is coupled with that of prayer in the Holy Quran. Abu Huraira related that a Beduin came to the Prophet, may peace be upon him, and said:

1 Bina Al-Islam, p. 108.

2 Bina Al-Islam, p. 117.

"I want you to guide me to the job which if I do I will enter Paradise." The Prophet said: "Worship God lonely, perform the compulsory prayer, pay compulsory alms, and fast Ramadan." The Beduin said: "I swear by Allah who is able to put an end to my life that I am not going to do more than what you ordered me to do." When the Beduin left, the Prophet said: "If some one is pleased to see one of the dwellers of Paradise, he can throw a look over this Beduin."

(Al-Tajrid Al-Sarih, vol. I, p. 95)

Dealing with fasting in the month of Ramadan, it enables the person, who fasts, to have the same feeling as felt by poor people who suffer from hunger and poverty. In order to pay generously, the Zakatul Fitre is preferred to be paid before performing the feast prayer (otherwise it will be considered a charity), so that the whole community is equally happy at that occasion. It is related that the Prophet, may peace be upon him said:

"In Paradise there is a door called Al-Rayyan, only the persons who fast will enter through it at the Last Day. It will be said: Where are the fasters? They will proceed through that door and no-one else will accompany them."

(Al-Tajrid Al-Sarih, vol. I, p. 121)

Dealing with performing pilgrimage, it is clear that all muslims seem alike in Arafat. There is no difference between the ruler and the common people, the rich and the poor. During pilgrimage, muslims have so many good things, mention the name of Allah, remembering the well known days as He provided them with beasts of the flocks. Muslims slaughter animals, eat themselves and feed the poor. The Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him said:

"Whoever performs Hajj for Allah's pleasure and does not have the sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return, after Hajj, free from all sins, as if he were born anew."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 347)

There are two more ranks which are linked with Islam and they are Iman Ihsan, so we would like also to look to these two ranks from the point of view which deals with the muslim brotherhood. If we had a look over the branches of Iman (Faith) we would realise that it consists of more than seventy branches, as it is stated to be the saying of the Prophet, may peace be upon him.

"The highest of these branches is to testify that there is no god but Allah, and the lowest is to remove any obstacle from any path. Modesty is one of the branches of Iman."

(Fundamentals of Islam, p. 13)

To remove any obstacle from any path, represents the muslim brotherhood and the human brotherhood as well. Dealing with modesty it is stated that the Prophet said:

"Each religion has its own character and the character of Islam is modesty."

This saying has a link with the Prophet's saying in His last pilgrimage, addressing believers:

"No doubt. Allah made your blood, properties and honour sacred to one another like the sanctity of this day of yours in this month of yours and at this place of yours."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 462)

God says:

"Say to the believers, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts; that is purer to them. God is aware of the things they work: And say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts."

(Light, ver. 30-31)

It is great benefit and pleasure to feel that your blood, property and honour are safe.

The rank of Ihsan is explained by the Prophet, may peace be upon him, in his saying:

"It is to worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, though you do not see Him, yet He sees you."

(Fundamentals of Islam, p. 16)

We can understand accordingly, that the meaning of worship in Islam is too wide. Each good job done by muslim, who wants by his job to satisfy God, is included as worship, even the piece of loaf of bread put by the husband in the mouth of his wife, the smiling of the muslim when he meets his muslim brother, and the good word with which he addresses him. Also these are part of worship.

How can we inculcate muslim brotherhood?

According to what is stated previously, it is clear that muslim can inculcate muslim brotherhood and preserve it through being associated strictly, first of all, with the Holy Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, may peace be upon him. The Prophet on his last pilgrimage, addressed the believers saying:

"I have left with you something which if you hold fast to it you will never fall into error, a plain indication for the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet."

(The Life of Muhammad, p. 651)

Dealing with the Holy Book, Quran, God gives His promise to protect it for good. God says in the Holy Book:

"It is we who sent down the Remembrance, and We watch over it."

(Al-Hijr, ver. 9)

As far as Sunna is concerned which means the saying of the Prophet his deeds and his approvals, God desires sunna to be preserved completely and properly, so that in the interest of muslims and the whole world, the only historical, complete, comprehensive and practicable life is preserved. It is the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and may peace be upon him, God ordered us to take what the prophet ordered us to take and give over what he ordered us to give over. God says:

"Whatever the Messenger gives you, take; whatever he forbids you give over."

(The Mustering, ver. 7)

We have about one hundred thousand sayings linked with the Prophet's sayings, deeds, and approvals and therefore it is likely to have the complete life of the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him. Scholars distinguished between correct and false Ahadith. The number of believers who listened to the Prophet delivering his sermon on his last pilgrimage, was about one hundred thousand. The Prophet ordered them to carry, what they heard, to others. There are ten thousand companions, whose names and biography have been recorded in history. Scholars take care of those persons only because each one of them preserved something which deals with the Prophet's sayings, deeds, behaviour, guidance and life.

There are some of the verses from the Holy Quran which contain some of

the instructions which muslims should follow strictly if they wanted to be respected in this life and success in the life hereafter. God says:

"O believers, fear Allah as He should be feared, and see that you do not die save in surrender. And hold fast to God's bond, together, and do not scatter; remember Allah's Blessing upon you when you were enemies, and He brought your hearts together, so that by His blessing you become brothers. You were upon the brink of a pit of Fire, and He delivered you from it; even so God makes clear to you His signs so happy you will be guided. Let there be a group of persons among you, calling to good, and bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour; Those are the prospers. Be not as those who scattered and fell into variance after the clear signs came to them; those there awaits a mighty chastisement."

(The House of Imran, ver. 102-105)

Ordering the believers to do good and forbid others of doing well, the Holy Quran says:

"You are the best nation ever brought forth to me, bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour, and believing in God. Had the People of the Book believed; it were better for them; some of them are believers, but the most of them are ungodly."

(The House of Imran, ver. 109)

Ordering the believers to feel mercy for each other and to consult together their own affairs, addressing to the Holy Prophet, God says:

"It was by some mercy of God that you were gentle to them. Had you been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from about you. So pardon them and pray forgiveness for them and take counsel with them in the affair, and when you are resolved, put your trust in God; surely God loves those who put their trust."

(The House of Imran, ver. 159)

Urging the believers to co-operate, the Holy Quran says:

"Help one another to piety and godfearing; do not help each other to sin and enmity. And fear Allah, surely God is terrible in retribution."

(The Table, ver. 2)

and God says:

"O believers, whosoever of you turns from his religion God will assuredly bring a people He loves, and who loves Him humble towards the believers, disdainful towards the unbelievers, men who struggle in the path of God, not fearing the reproach of any reproacher. That is God's bounty; He gives it into whom He will and God is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

(The Table, ver. 54)

Describing the believers, the Holy Quran says:

"Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another, You see them bowing, prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah and good pleasure. Their mark are on their faces, the trace of prostration. That is their like likeness in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel: as a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises straight upon its stalk, pleasing the sowers, that through them that He may enrage the unbelievers. God has promised that those of them who believe and do deed of righteousness, forgiveness and a might wage."

(Victory, ver. 29)

Promising the believers to help and to give them victory, God says:

"God has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make you successors in the land, even as He made those who were before their successor, and that He will surely establish their religion for them that He has approved for them, and will give them in exchange, after their fear, security. They shall serve me not associating with Me anything. Who so disbelieves after that, those, they are the ungodly."

(Light, ver. 55)

Urging the believers to fight for the sake of Allah and to seek knowledge, God says:

"It is not for the believers to go forth totally; but why should not a party of every section of them go forth, to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, that happy they may beware."

(Repentance, ver. 122)

Praising the Al-ansars, who preferred the emigrants to themselves and describing the believers, God says:

"And those who made their dwelling in the abode and in belief, before them, love whosoever has emigrated to them, not finding in their breasts any need for what they have been given, and preferring others above themselves, even though poverty be their portion. And whose is guarded against the avarice of his own soul, those, they are the prosperers. And for those who came after them, they say 'our Lord, forgive us and our brothers, who preceded us in belief, and put You not into our hearts any rancour towards those who believe. Our Lord surely You are All-Gentle, the All-Compassionate."

(The Mustering, ver. 9-10)

And directing the believers into the correct path, God says:

"If two parties of the believers fight, put things right between them: then, if one of them is insolent against the other, fight the insolent one till it reverts to God's Commandment. If it reverts, set things right between them equitably, and be just. Surely Allah loves the just. The believers indeed are brothers; so set things right between your two brothers, and fear Allah, happily so you will find mercy. O believers let not any people scoff at another people who may be better than they; neither let women scoff at women who may be better than themselves. And find not fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames. An evil name is ungodliness after belief. And who so repents not, those they are the evil doers. O believers, eschew much suspicion, some suspicion is a sin. And do not spy, neither backbite one another; would anyone of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would abominate it. And fear Allah; assuredly God turns, and He is All-Compassionate. O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most godfearing of you. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

(Al-Hujurat, ver. 9-13)

As it becomes very clear that muslims must follow strictly the Holy Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, it is very essential for muslims to learn Arabic language, honoured by God by being the language of the last Holy Book, to form the muslim Ummah. There is another

important matter, linked with this fact, and this matter is that the Holy Book and the Prophet's Sunna, have been written in Arabic and Islamic scripts. Muslims, all over the world, embraced these scripts and wrote in them their Islamic legacy, so it became too easy to read the Holy Book and the sayings of the Prophet. These many languages, have been influenced by the Arabic language, so, it becomes easy for muslims to learn the language of the other muslim countries, and to get easily, the benefit from the legacy of each other. Nowadays there is a strong opposition directed against the Arabic Islamic scripts in order to cut the muslim Ummah into several groups, by replacing the Latin scripts instead of the Islamic scripts. All the muslims should take care of this mischievous move which is directed, in fact, against Islam and therefore should unit together to push away the danger that threatens the Islamic scripts in which the Holy Quran has been written, since the time of the third Rashid Rhalif Uthman b. Affan. This kind of co-operation is one of co-operations which are meant by God's saying:

"Help one anothe to piety and godfearing, do not help each other to sin and enmity."

(The Table, ver. 2)

Dr. Hassan Bajouda, Associate Professor, King Abdul Aziz University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia was invited by the Department of Semitic Studies, University of Sydney as visiting professor for one year (1975-1976). He is a scholar in Islamic studies and has published books and articles on different themes of Holy Quran. This booklet " Muslim Brotherhood " is a talk delivered by Dr. Bajouda at the University of New South Wales, Sydney in 1975. Referring to Quran and Hadith he has very explicitly made it clear that the Unity of God ultimately culminates into the Unity of mankind. Brotherhood is not merely a slogan but an inevitable necessity for the socio-political structure of the Muslim Ummah. The fundamentals of Islam direct towards the Muslim Brotherhood.
